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WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA  
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

*No. 1*

ANNUAL REPORT  
of the  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
for the year 1956  
to which is appended the  
REPORT of the  
PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR.





WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Public Health Department

STAFF

Medical Officer of Health

W.H. CRICHTON, C.I.E., M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Public Health Inspector

F. RODWELL, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.



WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Public Health Committee

1956

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Chairman -- Mr. C.A. Claxton.

Members -- Mr. H.N. Aldridge  
Mr. J. Cadamy  
Mr. J.R. Cox  
Mr. H.W. Dunsdon  
Mr. A.W. Drury  
Mr. T.C. Grange  
Dr. E.W. Hicks  
Rev. T.W. Lambert  
Mr. W.F. Thurgur  
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## CONTENTS.

Part I - The Report of the Medical Officer of Health .....	p. 1 - 5
Staff .....	p. 1
General character and Population of District.....	p. 1
Meteorological Conditions .....	p. 1
Vital Statistics .....	p. 2 - 3
Communicable Diseases .....	p. 3 - 4
Environmental Sanitation .....	p. 4 - 5
Appendix A - Climatic Data .....	p. 6
Appendix B - Water Tests - Chemical... ..	p. 7
Appendix C - Water Tests - Bacteriological .....	p. 8
Part II - The Report of Surveyor and Senior Public Health Inspector.p	- 9 - 13





PART I- General -(1) Staff -

As I took over the appointment of Medical Officer of Health to the Urban District Council on 1st August 1956 on the resignation of Dr. Coutts Milne, my personal knowledge of the District is restricted to the latter half of the year under review. The only senior member of the Health Staff is the Public Health Inspector and Surveyor - Mr. F. Rodwell for whose assistance and expert knowledge of the District I have good reason to be grateful. Although the area of the District is not large, Mr. Rodwell's many and multifarious duties, especially during the summer season, tend to be very onerous.

(2) General Character and Population of District -

(a) Population - Wells-next-the-Sea is a small but charming seaside town with a resident population estimated at 2,590 for the mid year 1956 and a large influx of summer visitors who are attracted in growing numbers to its excellent beaches and delightful surroundings. The resident population has varied little in size during the last five years (average 2590.8) and not at all since the estimated figure for 1955. A considerable number of U.S.A.F. families have become residents of Wells since the establishment of the Base at Sculthorpe. Welcome as these Allies and their families are, their advent has inevitably aggravated the housing problem. Wells, with its many amenities, attracts an increasing number of retired people as well as workers in the neighbouring rural districts of Walsingham and Docking.

The natural increase in the population, that is to say the increase of births over deaths during 1956 was 24.

(b) Area - 2670 acres.

(c) The Rateable Value - £23,913 - per head of population £9.5.4d.

(d) Sum represented by a penny rate = £93. 5.5d.

(3) Meteorological Conditions -

The data which have been furnished to me by courtesy of the Air Ministry Meteorological Office are based on observations at the R.A.F. Station at West Raynham. Although these cannot be accurately applied to the District, they serve, in the absence of other observations, to give some indication of the climatic conditions which prevailed and the effect which these may have had on the health of the District. The data are summarised as Appendix A. (page 6 ).

The summer of 1956 was one of the worst on record. It will be noted that the rainfall during the summer months - June, July and August - was higher than that recorded at any other time of the year. The highest reading was 3.7 inches in August and the total rainfall for the year was 26.17 inches. The relative humidity under these conditions remained at high level throughout the year and particularly so in the improved weather conditions which prevailed during the Autumn and early winter. Temperatures, as might be expected, were not high in the summer, the highest mean daily temperature recorded being 59.9°F in July. On the other hand, temperatures were not exceptionally low in the winter months at either end of the year. The Spring was perfect. Under these conditions, colds and snuffles among children tended to persist, holidays were ruined and spirits generally were depressed.



- Vital Statistics -(1) Births -

The number of births registered in the District was 50 during 1956. These are analysed as follows:-

(a) Live Births

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Legitimate	28 (21) <sup>x</sup>	19 (16)	47 (37)
Illegitimate	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)
			<u>50 (40)</u>

(b) The number of births recorded represents a live birth rate of 19.30 per 1,000 population as compared with 15.4 per 1,000 in the preceding year and an average rate of 18.10 per 1,000 during the last quinquennium.

(c) The adjusted birth rate ( $19.30 \times 1.11$  the comparability factor) is 24.42 per 1,000 which compares very favourably with the rate for the whole of England and Wales which is 15.7 per 1,000 and which must be borne in mind in assessing the housing needs of the District.

(d) The illegitimate birth rate expressed as a percentage of the total births is 6% as compared with 8% in the preceding year.

(e) Still births - None were reported.

(2) Deaths -

(a) The total number of deaths from all causes was 26 of whom 15 were males and 11 females. These happen to be exactly the same figures as those recorded in 1955 and represent a Crude Death Rate of 10.4 per 1,000 population as against 10.04 per 1,000 in the preceding year.

(b) The adjusted Death Rate ( $10.4 \times 0.84$ ) is 8.73 per 1,000 which compares very favourably with the all England and Wales death rate of 11.7 per 1,000

(c) The Causes of Death as recorded by the Registrar General were as follows:-

<u>Causes of Death</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Cancer of breast	-	1	1 )
" other forms	2	1	3 ) (7) <sup>x</sup>
Vascular lesions Nervous system	2	1	3 (4)
Coronary disease - Heart	2	-	2 (1)
Other heart diseases	2	3	5 (1)
Other diseases of Circulation	3	1	4 (-)
Bronchitis	3	-	3 (2)
Other diseases of respiratory system	-	1	1 (4)
Nephritis	-	1	1 (-)
Other diseases	1	2	3 (7)
Totals	15	11	26 (26)

<sup>x</sup> Figures in brackets represent figures for the preceding year.





It will be noted that during 1956 no death from cancer of the lungs or bronchi was recorded. (There was one in the preceding year). Deaths from cancer accounted for 7.6% of the total deaths registered in 1956 whereas the percentage in 1955 was 26%.

(d) The deaths by age group are shown as follows:-

				<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Totals</u>	
Under 1 year	...	...	...	- (-)	- (2)	- (2)	
1 and under 5	...	...	...	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	
5 " " 10	...	...	...	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	
10 " " 20	...	...	...	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	
20 " " 30	...	...	...	- (-)	1 (-)	1 (-)	figures
30 " " 40	...	...	...	- (1)	- (-)	- (1)	in brackets
40 " " 50	...	...	...	2 (-)	1 (-)	3 (-)	relate to
50 " " 60	...	...	...	4 (1)	1 (1)	5 (2)	previous
60 " " 70	...	...	...	1 (1)	1 (3)	2 (4)	year.
70 " " 80	...	...	...	4 (7)	7 (4)	11 (11)	
80 " " 90	...	...	...	4 (3)	4 (2)	8 (5)	
90 " " 100	...	...	...	1 (1)	- (-)	1 (1)	
Total				16 (14)	15 (12)	31 (26)	

(e) Infant Mortality - No infant deaths occurred in 1956. The infant mortality rate is therefore Nil as compared with 75 per 1,000 live births in 1955 as represented by three infant deaths. The infant mortality rates since 1951 are as follows:-

<u>1951</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>
-	53.57	21.27	-	75.0

It will be noted that this is the third occasion within the last six years that Wells-next-the-Sea has enjoyed a year completely free of infant deaths. This is a remarkable record.

#### - Communicable Diseases -

(a) Wells-next-the-Sea is in the very fortunate position of having only 4 cases of communicable disease notified during the year under review, and only one case in the preceding year. This also is a remarkable record and more particularly so as Wells has a large Modern Secondary School which serves a big section of the adjoining Rural Districts, neither of which, unfortunately, had as good a record of freedom from disease.

(b) The four cases notified were erysipelas (1) non-pulmonary tuberculosis (1) and jaundice (2). The investigations carried out in each case revealed no epidemiological factor of any significance.

(c) Specific immunisations were carried out throughout the year by Family Doctors and by myself in my capacity as Assistant County Medical Officer and School Medical Officer in Infant Welfare Clinics and Schools. These immunisations comprised vaccinations against smallpox and against diphtheria and whooping cough, and for the first time in history, vaccinations with the modified Salk vaccine, against poliomyelitis. The immunisations carried out in the Area during the year are summarised as follows:-



Age Groups	Under 1 yr.	1 - 4 yrs.	5 - 14 yrs.	15 +	Totals
<u>Diphtheria</u>					
Primary	248	95	52	-	395
Booster	-	-	730	-	730
					<u>1125</u>
<u>Whooping Cough</u>					
Combined with diphtheria.	208	86	52	-	346
Whooping Cough alone.	-	-	-	-	-
					<u>346</u>
<u>Smallpox</u>					
Primary	214	33	10	26	283
Re-vacc.	-	5	12	39	56
					<u>339</u>

"Booster" doses of diphtheria immunisation are given at school on admission and at age 10 +.

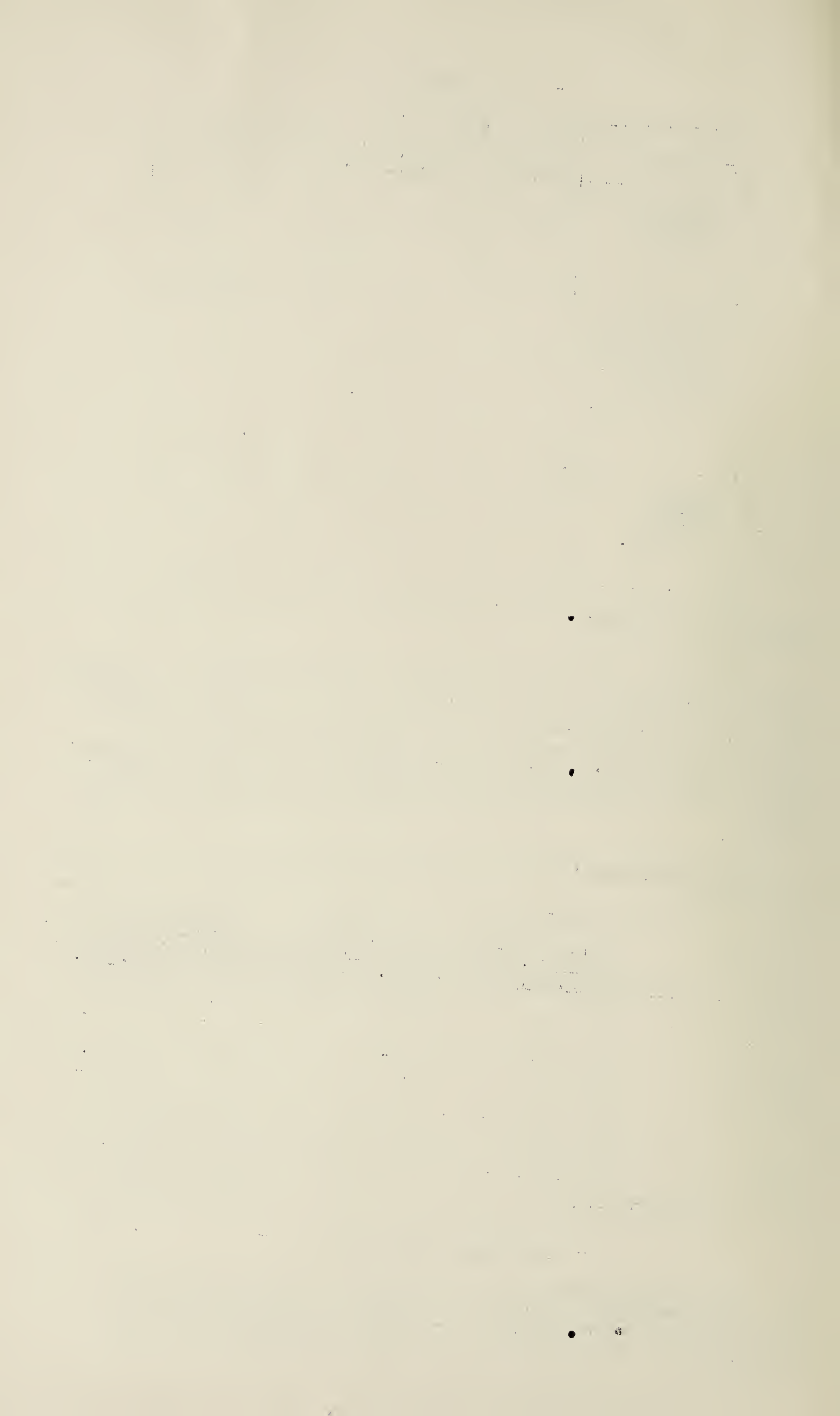
Vaccination against poliomyelitis was inaugurated during the year under review. Vaccination was offered to children in the 2 - 10 age group throughout the Area and consent forms were received from the parents of 1,845 children. Owing to delays in the production of the vaccine it was not possible to vaccinate more than 198 of these children during the year, but there is every prospect that the rate of production of the vaccine will be increased sufficiently to cover all requirements. In the meantime the vaccine is earning an increasing degree of public confidence and the demand for protection is rising rapidly.

(d) The Tuberculosis Situation in Wells as represented by the cases notified is as follows:-

Age Group	New Cases				Old Cases				On Register at end of year			
	Pulm.		Non-Pulm.		Pulm.		Non-Pulm.		Pulm.		Non-Pulm.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1 yr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 - 4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5 - 14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
15 - 24	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
25 - 34	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
35 +	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	5	2	-	1
Totals	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	9	2	1	2

- Environmental Sanitation -

The subjects comprised in this heading have been dealt with by the Public Health Inspector and Surveyor (Mr. Rodwell) in his report which is appended as Part II of this report. It is however incumbent on me to invite your attention to certain important features connected with the housing situation.





(a) Housing - Although the Council has built a very large number of houses (290) <sup>x</sup> relative to the size of the population, there are still a distressingly large number of families living in sub-standard houses. It will be noted from Mr. Rodwell's report that the estimated number of houses which are considered unfit for human habitation is 159.

Obviously, under present financial restrictions and high interest rates, the Council cannot be expected to embark on any extensive building programme but, at least, there should be no delay in the clearing of Slums and the provision of alternative accommodation for which purpose Government subsidies are available. It will be noted that during the year under review only six bungalows were built under this provision.

Many complaints have been received from families living in sub-standard houses since I took over the appointment and undoubtedly, the complaints of over-crowding, dampness, lack of ventilation, adequate storage, drainage, water supply and other amenities have invariably been substantiated on investigation. While the Council have invariably given these cases their sympathetic consideration and rehoused them when possible, an appreciable number still remain whose claims are distressingly urgent. It will be noted in this connection that no less than 150 houses are still served by earth or pail closets.

In these circumstances I can only hope that financial restrictions may soon be lifted and that in the meantime the fullest possible use be made as soon as possible of the financial facilities which exist for the clearance of Slums, and house improvements.

(b) Water Supply - The standard of the quality of water supplied by the Council has invariably been excellent. The quantity available however has at times given rise to some concern during the holiday season when the demand has put a heavy strain on the supply available, leaving a very small margin of "safety" during peak periods. It is hoped that this somewhat precarious situation can be adjusted either through the negotiations in progress for integration with other water services in adjoining areas or by other means.

Summaries of the results of chemical and bacteriological examinations carried out are attached as Appendix B and Appendix C (pages 7 & 8) to this report.

x	Housing Schemes	Pre-War	152 houses
		Post-War	84 houses
			40 flats
			4 shops & flats
		Prefabricated	10
			<hr/>
			290 dwellings



APPENDIX A.

## CLIMATIC DATA.

	Mean daily Maximum Temp.	Mean daily Minimum Temp.	Mean daily Temp.	Total rainfall (inches).	Mean Relative Humidity.
January	40	34	37	3.33	90.7
February	33.9	25.4	29.7	1.80	88.8
March	48.8	34.7	41.7	0.96	81.7
April	49.0.	35.4	42.2	1.31	77.7
May	63.1	44.1	53.6	1.15	70.7
June	60.1	47.8	53.9	3.27	80.2
July	66.1	53.8	59.9	3.61	82.5
August	62.9	48.9	55.9	3.70	83.0
September	64.2	50.4	57.5	1.58	86.5
October	54.3	43.1	48.7	2.54	87
November	46.3	37.6	41.7	1.55	92
December	45.2	38.8	42.0	1.47	91.2



APPENDIX B.

Summary of chemical analyses of water samples  
(carried out by Messrs. Lincolne, Barton and Wood)

Date	(A) 16th January, 1956	(B) 26th September, 1956
Appearance	Clear	Clear
Reaction	Alkaline pH 7.8	faintly Alkaline pH 7.5
Taste	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Ammoniacal Nitrogen	0.04 p.p.m	Negligible trace
Albuminoid Nitrogen	0.06 "	0.02 p.p.m.
Nitrate Nitrogen	Nil	1.5 "
Nitrite Nitrogen	Nil	Nil
Chlorine as chlorides	86 "	70 "
Oxygen absorbed (4hr)	0.15 "	0.3 "
Hardness as CaCO <sub>3</sub>		
Total	306 "	295 "
Temporary	240 "	225 "
Permanent	66 "	70 "
Total solids	544 "	498 "
Metals in solution	Nil	Nil

Opinion. (A) Fit for drinking and all purposes of a public supply

(B) Fit for drinking purposes and for use as a public supply.



APPENDIX C.

Summary of bacteriological findings on water samples  
(Carried out by Messrs. Lincoln, Sutton & Wood).

Date	(A) 16th Jan. 1956.	(B) 26th Sept.1956.	(C) 23rd. Oct.1956
No. of colonies per cc. in 48 hrs. @ 37°C.	1	Nil	Nil
Presumptive coliforms prob. no. per 100 ml.	Nil	5	Nil
B. coli. Type 1 (faecal)	Nil	Nil	Nil

- Opinion:- (A) "Bacteriological condition of the water is highly satisfactory".
- (B) In view of the fact that there was no chemical evidence of pollution (See Appendix B) ... "the presence of a small number of coliform organisms of non-faecal origin can be regarded as not unsatisfactory"... A further sample to be taken.
- (C) "This sample is highly satisfactory"





PART II

THE REPORT OF

MR. F. RODWELL, M.R. San.I., M.S.I.A.,

SURVEYOR

and

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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Inspections

The number of inspections carried out in connection with Public Health work during the year were as follows:-

<u>Nature of Inspections</u>	<u>Number of Visits.</u>
Housing Survey	47
Housing repairs, Byelaws, overcrowding etc.	145
Slaughterhouses	71
Shops	61
Pests Act	38
Factories & Workshops, and Bakehouses	21
Nuisances and Miscellaneous	205

588

During the year 47 complaints were received regarding nuisances and pests.

Housing

Slum Clearance. I estimate the number of houses to be demolished as unfit for human habitation as follows:-

(i) Houses scheduled under previous Orders and awaiting demolition	...	...	...	...	...	...	9
(ii) Houses in clearance area still to be declared and individual houses closed but not demolished	..	...	...	...	...	...	150
<u>Estimated number of unfit houses</u>	...	...	...	...	...	...	<u>159</u>

During the year 14 houses were demolished in the following parts of the town:-

Plummers Hill	1
Burnt Street	3
Church Street	7
Jolly Sailor Yard	1

New Housing -- During the year the following houses were constructed.

(i) By the Council for Slum Clearance. Three pairs of bungalows	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
(ii) By Private enterprise	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
<u>Total new housing</u>	...	...	...	...	...	...	<u>8</u>

Housing Applications

At the 31st December, 1956 there were 51 applicants (excluding slum clearance) on the Council's Housing list, and during the year 13 families were rehoused including 6 families in the bungalows.

Improvement Grants

Applications received during the year	...	...	...	3
Applications approved during the year	...	...	...	2
Financial grants approved during the year	...	...	...	\$715.2.6

Defects at 22 houses were remedied as the result of informal action.

Action taken under Statutory Powers resulted as follows:-

Houses rendered fit	2
Houses closed and demolished	7
Houses demolished	1



## Camping Sites

There are sto Caravan and Camping sites in the area approved by the County Planning Authority.

- (i) The Beach Road Site controlled by the Council.
- (ii) The Burnt Street site at Orchard Farm, under private control.

The Beach Road site is becoming more popular every year and during the year Sanitary accommodation was improved by the purchase of the external wall of an Arcon Bungalow which was adapted to form a new ladies convenience containing 10 W.C's and 6 wash basins. The six ladies W.C's in the original lavatories being added to the mens lavatories thus increasing sanitary accommodation.

Informal action was taken regarding the sanitary accommodation at the Burnt Street site and improvements are to be completed during the coming year.

## Water Supply

No extensions to mains were carried out during the year. During the year the extending of the 2" Asbestos main at East Quay was authorised by the Council, to be carried out in 1957.

New Connections to mains during year	...	...	...	...	5
Number of Domestic properties drawing water supplies from the mains	...	...	...	...	956
Dwelling houses not obtaining water from the mains					6

During the year 3 samples of water were submitted for Analysis and Bacteriological examination and 1 sample was submitted from a private well. I append the reports on the examinations (See Appendix B & Appendix C - (pages 7 & 8)).

## Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

Extensions to sewers during the year	Nil
Connections to sewers	4
Dwelling houses on cesspool drainage (Also the Cottage Hospital and Nurses' Home)	3
Number of houses which have earth closets (including about 50 in Clearance areas).	150

## Milk Supply

The whole of the milk supply is pasteurised and delivered to the Freymen by Messrs. Seamans Dairies, King's Lynn. There are two licensed Freymen for distribution of milk. No milk samples were submitted for routine examination during the year.

## Food Preparing Premises

The following premises are registered under Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955.

For the sale of Ice Cream	11
Fish and Chip Shops	3
Sausages and Potted Meats	<u>5</u>
	<u>19</u>

No additional premises were registered during the year. Most of the shops have been made to comply with the requirements of the Food Hygiene Regulations.

It was necessary to serve 5 informal notices requiring compliance with the Regulations.

